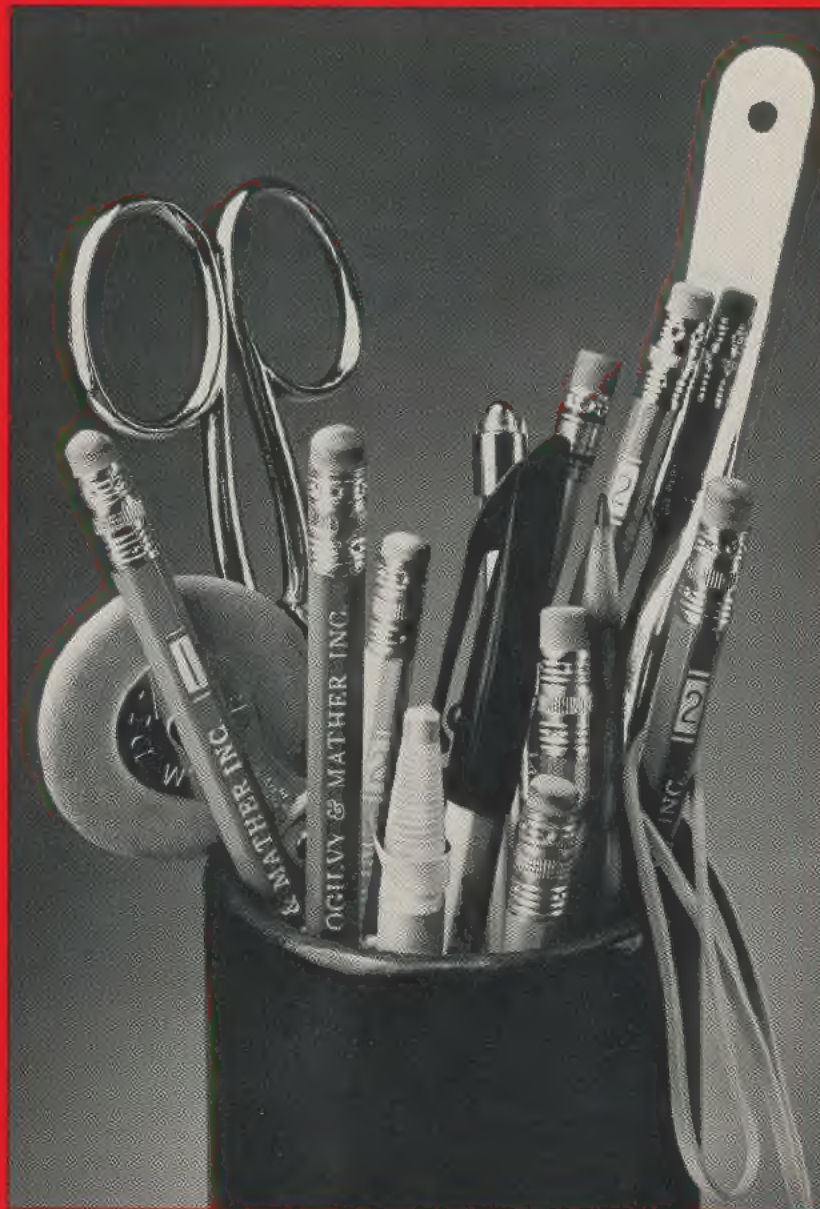


How to write better

The Ogilvy & Mather guide to
writing effective memos, letters, reports,
plans and strategies



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Why you must be able to write well

The purpose of this manual is to help you write better. You must be able to convey ideas in writing—quickly, clearly and persuasively.

We are in the business of communicating ideas. Letters, plans and reports must be written as professionally as advertising copy.

Good writing reflects clear thinking and hard work. While some people find the process easier than others, even the best writers sweat over their work. David Ogilvy attributes a large

part of his success to being a good editor of his own work.

Good writing is a prerequisite to success at Ogilvy & Mather. All the members of our top management are good writers. Coincidence?

This manual is in three parts.

The first part contains some practical suggestions on writing style. The second deals with the organization and content of letters, memos and other business documents. The third shows how to write creative strategies.

20 secrets of good writing

When you are speaking for Ogilvy & Mather, your writing must meet our standards. These allow ample room for individuality and freshness of expression. But "personal style" is not an excuse for sloppy, unprofessional writing.

Here are some suggestions on how to improve your writing—20 principles that all good writers follow.

1. Keep in mind that the reader doesn't have much time. What you write must be clear on first reading. If you want your paper to be read by senior people, remember that they have punishing schedules, evening engagements and bulging briefcases.

The shorter your paper, the better the chance it will be read at high levels. During World War II, no document of more than one page was allowed to reach Churchill's desk.

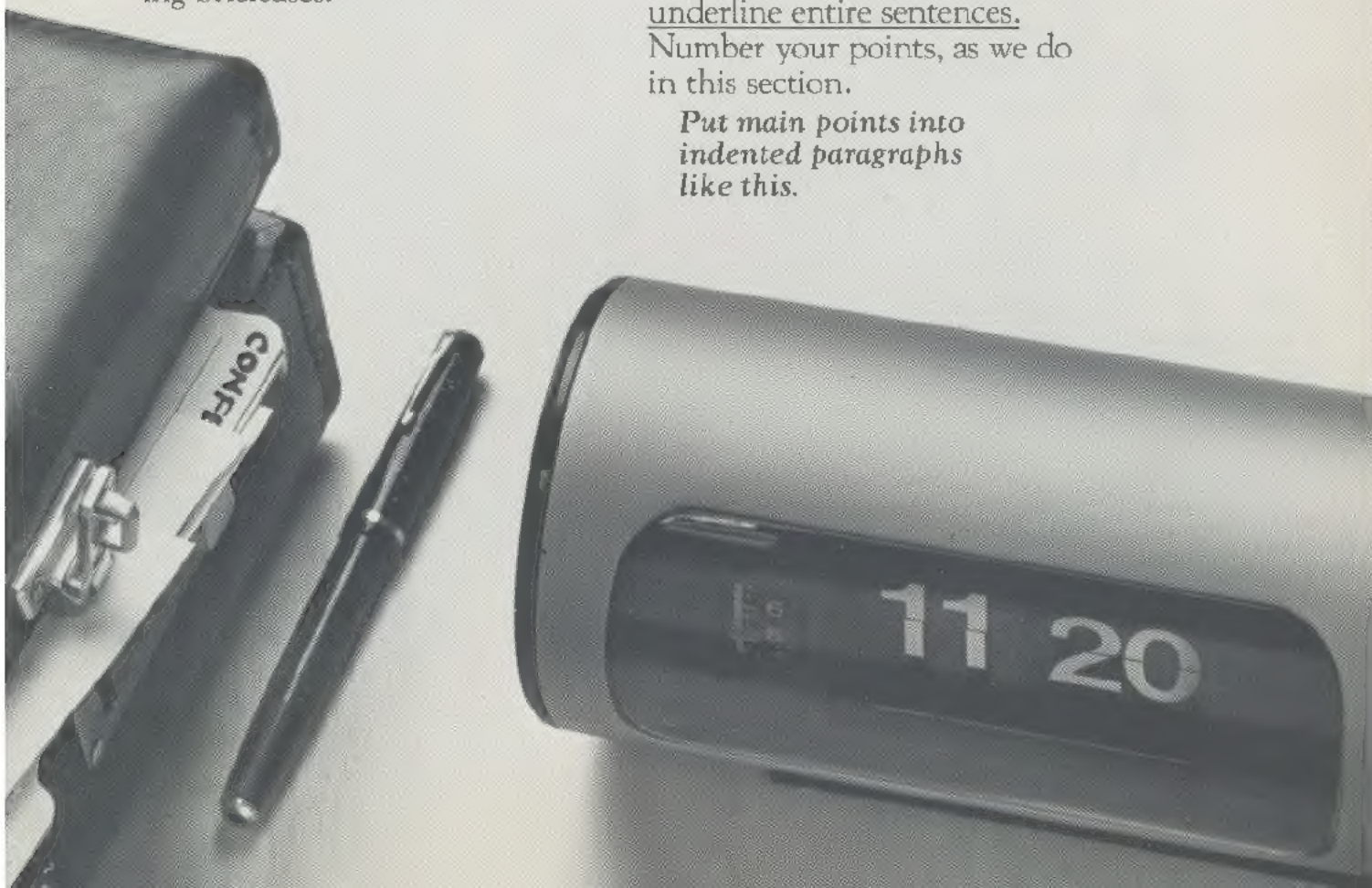
2. Know where you are going—and tell the reader. Start with an *outline* to organize your argument.

Begin important paragraphs with topic sentences that tell what follows. Conclude with a summary paragraph.

An outline not only helps the reader; it keeps you from getting lost en route. Compile a list of all your points before you start.

3. Make what you write easy to read. For extra emphasis, underline entire sentences. Number your points, as we do in this section.

Put main points into indented paragraphs like this.



4. Short sentences and short paragraphs are easier to read than long ones. Send telegrams, not essays.

5. Make your writing vigorous and direct. Whenever possible use active verbs, and avoid the passive voice.

Passive

We are concerned that if this recommendation is turned down, the brand's market share may be negatively affected.

Active

We believe you must act on this recommendation to hold the brand's share.

6. Avoid clichés. Find your own words.

Cliché

Turn over every rock for a solution
Put it to the acid test
Few and far between
Last but not least
Iron out

Direct

Try hard
Test thoroughly
Few
Last
Remove

7. Avoid vague modifiers such as "very" and "slightly." Search for the word or phrase that *precisely* states your meaning.

Vague

Very overspent
Slightly behind schedule

Precise

Overspent by \$1,000
One day late

8. Use specific, concrete language. Avoid technical jargon, what E.B. White calls "the language of mutilation."

There is always a simple, down-to-earth word which says the same thing as the show-off fad word or the abstraction.

Jargon

Parameters

Implement

Viable

Interface

Optimum

Meaningful

To impact

Resultful

Finalize

Judgmentally

Input

Output

It is believed that with the parameters that have been imposed by your management, a viable solution may be hard to find. If we are to impact the consumer to the optimum, further interface with your management may be the most meaningful step to take.

Plain English

Limits, boundaries

Carry out

Practical, workable

To talk with

Best

Real, actual

To affect

Effective, to have results

Complete

I think

Facts, information

Results

We believe that the limits your management gave us may rule out a practical solution. If we want our consumer program to succeed, maybe we ought to talk with your management again.

9. Find the right word.

Know its precise meaning.

Use your dictionary, and
your thesaurus.

Don't confuse words like these:

To **"affect"** something is to have an influence on it. (The new campaign affects few attitudes.)

"It's" is the contraction of "it is." (It's the advertising of P&G.)

"Principal" is the first in rank or performance. (The principal competition is P&G.)

"Imply" means to suggest indirectly. (The writer implies it won't work.)

"i.e." means "that is."

"Effect" can mean to bring about (verb) or a result (noun). (It effected no change in attitudes, and had no effect.)

"Its" is the possessive form of "it" and does not take an apostrophe. (Check P&G and its advertising.)

"Principle" is a fundamental truth or rule. (The principle of competing with P&G is to have a good product.)

"Infer" means to draw meaning out of something. (The reader infers it won't work.)

"e.g." means "for example."

When you confuse words like these, your reader is justified in concluding that you don't know better. Illiteracy does not breed respect.

effect

1. *ef.fekt* \-fekt\ *n* [ME, fr. M. *effectus*, fr. L. *effectus*, fr. *efficere* to bring about]
pp. of *efficere* to bring about
1: something produced by an agent
2: something that follows as a result of an action
3: something that follows as a result of a cause
4: something that follows as a result of a condition
5: something that follows as a result of a process
6: something that follows as a result of a series of events
7: something that follows as a result of a sequence of events
8: something that follows as a result of a chain of events
9: something that follows as a result of a series of causes
10: something that follows as a result of a series of effects
11: something that follows as a result of a series of consequences
12: something that follows as a result of a series of results
13: something that follows as a result of a series of outcomes
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100: something that follows as a result of a series of effects

10. Don't make spelling mistakes. When in doubt, check the dictionary. If you are congenitally a bad speller, make sure your final draft gets checked by someone who isn't thus crippled.

If your writing is careless, the reader may reasonably doubt the thoroughness of your thinking.

11. Don't overwrite or overstate. No more words than necessary. Take the time to boil down your points.

Remember the story of the man who apologized for writing such a long letter, explaining that he just didn't have the time to write a short one.

The Gettysburg Address used only 266 words.

12. Come to the point. Churchill could have said, "The position in regard to France is very serious." What he did say was, "The news from France is bad."

Don't beat around the bush. Say what you think—in simple, declarative sentences. Write confidently.

13. State things as simply as you can. Use familiar words and uncomplicated sentences.

14. Handle numbers consistently. Newspapers generally spell out numbers for ten and under, use numerals for 11 and up.

Don't write M when you mean a thousand, or MM when you mean a million. The reader may not know this code. Write \$5,000—not \$5M. Write \$7,000,000 (or \$7 million)—not \$7MM.

15. Avoid needless words.

The songwriter wrote, "Softly as in a morning sunrise"—and Ring Lardner explained that this was as opposed to a late afternoon or evening sunrise. Poetic license may be granted for a song, but not for phrases like these:

Don't write

Advance plan
Take action
Have a discussion
Hold a meeting
Study in depth
New innovations
Consensus of opinion
At the present time
Until such time as
In the majority of instances
On a local basis
Basically unaware of
In the area of
At management level
With regard to
In connection with
In view of
In the event of
For the purpose of
On the basis of
Despite the fact that
In the majority of instances

Write

Plan
Act
Discuss
Meet
Study
Innovations
Consensus
Now
Until
Most
Locally
Did not know
Approximately
By management
About, concerning
Of, in, on
Because
If
For
By, from
Although
Usually

Always go through your first draft once with the sole purpose of deleting all unnecessary words, phrases, and sentences. David Ogilvy has improved many pieces of writing by deleting entire paragraphs, and sometimes even whole pages.

16. Be concise, but readable.

Terseness is a virtue, if not carried to extremes. Don't leave out words. Write full sentences, and make them count.

17. Be brief, simple and natural. Don't write, "The reasons are fourfold." Write, "There are four reasons."

Don't start sentences with "importantly." Write, "The important point is..."

Don't write "hopefully" when you mean "I hope that." "Hopefully" means "in a hopeful manner." Its common misuse annoys a

great many literate people.

Never use the word "basically." It can always be deleted. It is a basically useless word.

Avoid the hostile term "against," as in "This campaign goes against teen-agers." You are not *against* teen-agers. On the contrary, you want them to buy your product. Write, "This campaign addresses teen-agers," or "This campaign is aimed at teen-agers."

18. Don't write like a lawyer or a bureaucrat. "Re" is legalese meaning "in the matter of," and is never necessary.

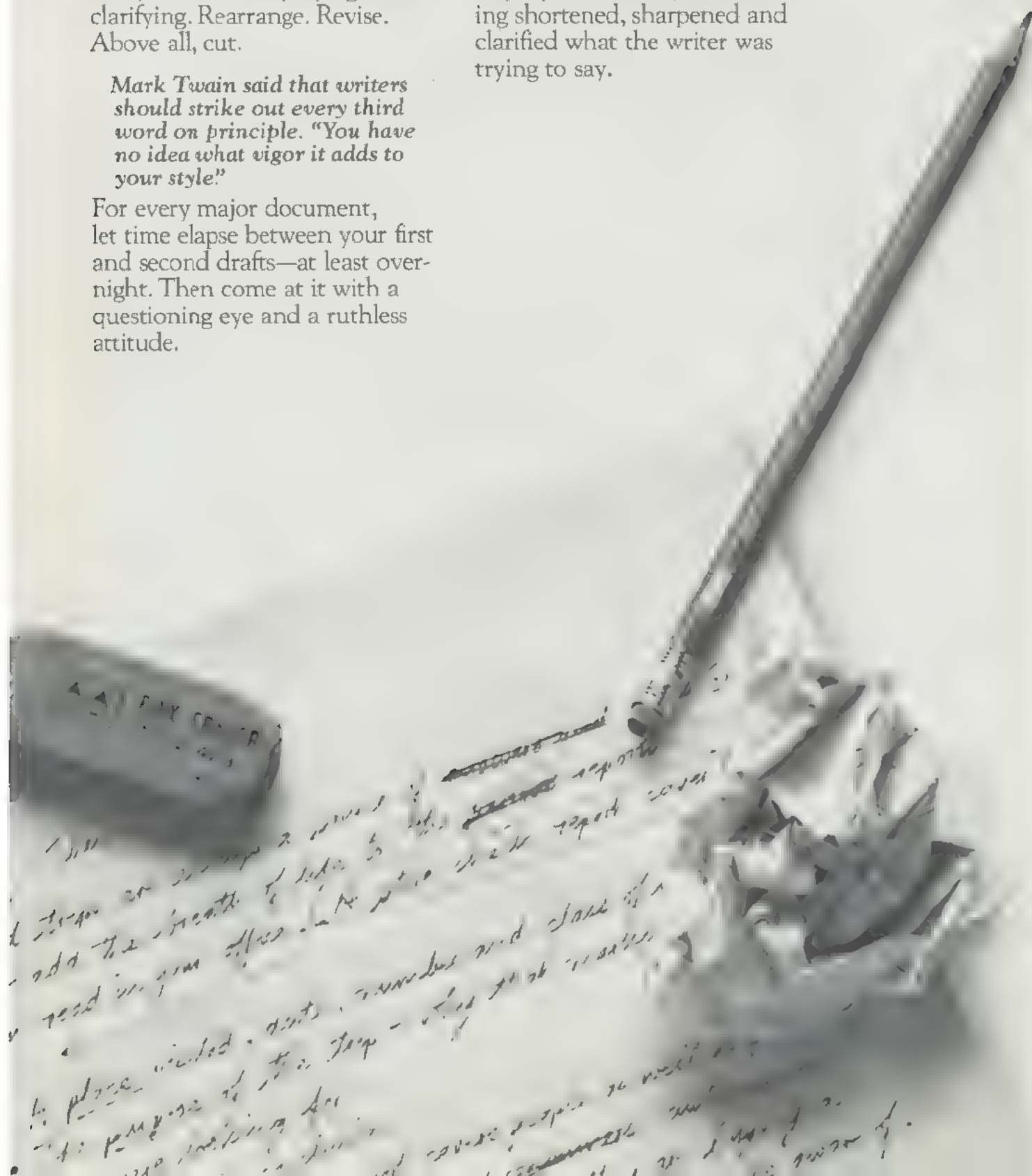
The slash—as in and/or—is bureaucratese. Don't write, "We'll hold the meeting on Monday and/or Tuesday." Write, "We'll hold the meeting on Monday or Tuesday—or both days, if necessary."

19. Never be content with your first draft. Rewrite, with an eye toward simplifying and clarifying. Rearrange. Revise. Above all, cut.

Mark Twain said that writers should strike out every third word on principle. "You have no idea what vigor it adds to your style."

For every major document, let time elapse between your first and second drafts—at least overnight. Then come at it with a questioning eye and a ruthless attitude.

* On the next page you will find five examples, taken from a single presentation, of how editing shortened, sharpened and clarified what the writer was trying to say.



First Draft

Consumer perception of the brand changed very positively.

Generate promotion interest through high levels of advertising spending.

Move from product advertising to an educational campaign, one that would instruct viewers on such things as...

Using the resources of Ogilvy & Mather in Europe, in addition to our Chicago office, we have been able to provide the company with media alternatives they had previously been unaware of.

Based on their small budget, we have developed a media plan which is based on efficiency in reaching the target audience.

Second Draft

Consumer perception of the brand improved.

Use heavy advertising to stimulate interest in promotions.

Move from product advertising to an educational campaign on such subjects as...

Ogilvy & Mather offices in Europe and Chicago showed the company media alternatives that it hadn't known about.

We developed a media plan that increases the efficiency of the small budget by focusing on prospects.

20. Have somebody else look over your draft.

All O&M advertising copy is reviewed many times, even though it is written by professional *writers*.

Before David Ogilvy makes a speech, he submits a draft to his partners for editing and comment.

What you write represents the agency as much as an advertisement by a creative director or a speech by a chairman. They solicit advice. Why not you?

The art of business writing

Always take the time to write as well as you can. Make your reports *clear*. Make your recommendations as persuasive as you know how.

It is no excuse to say there wasn't enough time to write a better memo. *Good writing saves time*—the time of everyone who must read, comprehend and act on what you have written.

First, some suggestions on the *organization and content* of various business documents—recommendation memos and letters, competitive reports, conference reports, store check reports, marketing plans, market share analyses, and informal letters.

Then, some tips on how to write them *better*.

Recommendation Memos and Letters

You are in the business of selling ideas to your colleagues within the agency as well as to your client. The well-written recommendation must *persuade*.

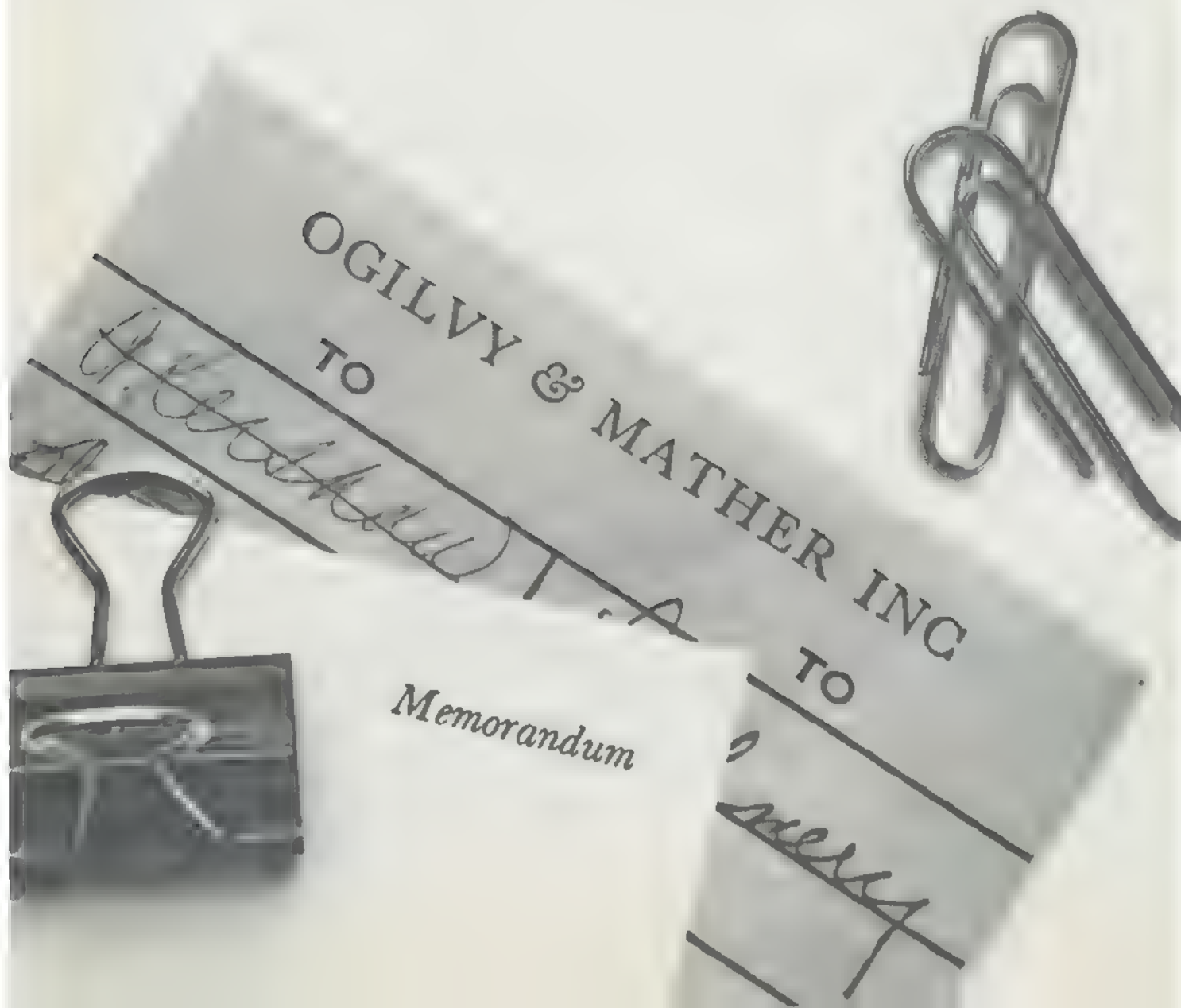
Formal recommendations are the foundations on which successful brands are built.

You must *know* your subject. Read everything. Consumer research, previous correspon-

dence, Nielsen reports, sales data, competitive reports. Dig for facts. If you are superficial, your argument is weakened.

Analyze what you know, and look for patterns. What general principles apply? Can you find analogies to other products or categories?

Be open-minded in looking at the data. Draw your conclusions from the *facts*.



Before you write a word, organize your thoughts. Outline the major points you want to make. The format will vary with the subject—recommending a campaign, a media plan, or some marketing action. But the thought process is the same.

Purpose. Always make the subject matter immediately clear. Tell the reader what he or she is going to read, and why it should be read.

Wrong

Attached is the latest Folger's copy. The copy strategy for Folger's appears to be...

Right

This presents our analysis of a new Folger's campaign, and recommends research to evaluate its impact.

Background. Put the subject in perspective. What must the reader know to understand what follows? Don't assume the reader is as familiar with the subject as you are. The document should be *self-contained*, so it can be passed along without explanation. But be concise.

Conclusions. Come to clear conclusions. Don't let the reader draw his or her own. A memo is not a short story with a surprise ending.

Recommendations.

What action is proposed? Be specific.

The recommendations must follow logically from your central conclusions.

Rationale. The previous sections are brief summaries; the rationale is the place to be *complete*.

List the reasons for your recommendations. What facts or judgments support them?

Marshal the arguments on *both* sides, then draw your conclusion.

Refer to research, marketing data, other options (and why they are not as good). Make the argument persuasive.

Next steps. Make crystal clear what you want the reader to do. What decisions are required? What is the cost and timing?

Avoid useless sign-offs. ("Please let me know if you have any questions.") If your letter is clear and complete, they're not needed.

Competitive Reports

An intelligent appraisal of competitive strengths and weaknesses is part of the battle. Know the enemy.

A competitive *copy* analysis includes:

- *Where and how long* the copy has run. Is it part of a campaign? National or local?
- A *description* of the specific advertisement and any continuing campaign elements. What is the key visual, the campaign theme, the commercial format? Any changes from previous advertising?
- The apparent *copy strategy*. What is the consumer benefit? What is the support for it?
- An *assessment* of both the strategy and the advertisement. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each? Whenever possible, base your judgments on what you *know* from research. When expressing *opinions*, make clear whose they are.
- *Implications* of the advertising, for the category and for your brand.

It is too easy to denigrate competitors. Evaluate their copy objectively. If you turn up something that goes counter to what you are doing, don't assume that the competition is stupid. Better to ask what *they* know that you *don't*.

For competitive *media* analyses, concentrate on spending:

- In the test area, and national projections.
- By medium, by daypart, by season.
- In comparison to previous periods, and to major competition.
- By sales — rate per case, share of advertising (compared to share of market).

Competitive media studies are difficult exercises in deductive reasoning. From the facts, you should try to draw out the strategy behind them.

Does the competition spend in relation to volume, or is there some other plan? Is their spending philosophy based on continuity or impact, reach or frequency? Is their target audience different from yours?

To this add your interpretation of what the competition is doing, why they are doing it, what you should do about it.

Conference Reports

A conference report has only one purpose: to record decisions at meetings.

Conference reports do not restate arguments or report praise or blame. They *record decisions* (and any implications).

Fill in the complete form (brand, place of meeting, people present, subject), and then—concisely—report:

- What was *shown* or *discussed*.
- What was *decided*—not why.
- What *action* is required.
- *Who* is responsible.
- *When* it is required.
- What *money* was authorized.

The conference report book is the official history of the brand. It reports all actions and decisions—and nothing else.

Take notes at all meetings

Never trust your memory. Write down everything you want to remember.

"The horror of that moment," said the King, "I shall never ever forget."

"Ah, but you will," said the Queen, "if you don't make a memorandum of it!"

ALICE IN WONDERLAND

The best reports are written by the people who take the best notes.



ENDORSEMENT CONCEPT TEST

CONFERENCE REPORTS

CONFERENCE REPORTS

Conference Report

CONFERENCE REPORTS

Store Check Reports

What's really going on out there? Often a field trip can give you better answers and faster answers than any amount of statistics.

Field trips are always a source of ideas. They add the breath of life to the reports you read in your office. A store check report covers:

- A *place* visited, date, number and class of stores.
- The *purpose* of the trip—why that market, what you were looking for.
- An overall *conclusion*.
- Specific *findings*: distribution, pricing, facings, shelf position, competitive activity, in-store promotions.

Pay special attention to packaging, particularly to *new* packages. How does the package look on the shelf, vis-à-vis competition? What looks great on a conference table often disappears on the shelf.

- Indicated *action*.

A good field trip report covers people as well as products. Include your observation of customers in the store—what they said, why they are buying a brand, what changes they may be aware of. Include the trade's perspective—what store managers have to say.

The report itself need not be long—two pages, with store details as backup.

Marketing Plans

The principles of business writing apply to the annual marketing plan.

The organization of the plan follows a logical pattern:

- *Compare the past year's results* to objectives, and draw major conclusions.
- *Review details* by category, size, geography, share. What was learned?
- *State the marketing objectives* for the coming year, including trial, users and usage rate.
- *State the marketing strategy* planned to achieve those objectives—including how it has changed, and reasons for the changes.
- *Outline specific strategies* for product, pricing, packaging, copy, media, promotion—with a rationale for each.
- *Outline major sales-building* projects.
- *What lessons* did we learn? What major risks do we foresee?

Market Share Analyses

Regular share reports are vital tools. They help you understand the dynamics of the market. They reveal the impact of marketing programs.

Syndicated research services—Nielsen, SAMI—provide invaluable data in many categories.

Don't be "creative" in writing share analyses. Just report clearly:

- The *share* for the latest period.
- How it *compares* to the same period a year ago, to the previous period, to competition, and to expectations.

Handle numbers consistently—reading from left to right in terms of historical data and latest shares.

Year Ago	Last Period	Current Period
10.0	10.5	11.0

- What happened to the total market.
- The *trend* over the past 12 months.
- The *major influences* on the share—copy, spending, promotion, competitive activity, outside influences.

- Your *conclusion* about the brand's performance. Don't just restate the report figures; what do the numbers reveal?

- Your *prediction* for the next period with your reason for it.

- Any indicated *action*.

Keep it short (1-2 pages), clear, and correct. Highlight the *news*.



COPIES OF MARKET SHARE
REPORTS ARE AVAILABLE

Letters

Letters and memos are a large part of the account executive's written work.

There are no rules for the casual letter, but you should follow the principles of good writing and good manners.

Be helpful. Answer questions quickly and directly. Make sure you cover everything the writer is asking for. Be helpful.

Put yourself in your reader's shoes. In his or her place, what would you want to get out of the letter?

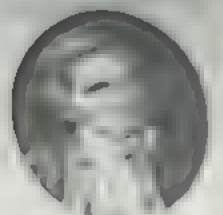
A good letter is personal. Avoid stilted "business" English. Be simple and friendly.

"The secret to more effective writing is simple," says authority Rudolph Flesch.

"Talk to your reader. Pretend the person who'll read your letter or report is sitting across from you, or that you are on the phone with him. Be informal. Relax."

But don't assume a tone of unwarranted familiarity. You can be informal without getting chummy.

Remember that your letters reflect you as well as the agency. They carry your signature, figuratively and literally.



Linda Ryan
Creative Services Group
1981

12 Tips on Better Business Writing

1. Tailor your writing for the reader. What questions or obstacles is he or she likely to raise? What information is required?

A good lawyer never asks a question in court without knowing the answer. You should not write a letter without trying to anticipate how the reader will react.

You can shorten the decision process if you anticipate objections to your recommendation in the recommendation itself.

2. Be human and personal. Write as you would talk. Don't hide behind impersonal language.

<u>Impersonal</u>	<u>Personal</u>
He should be told	Please tell him
It is recommended	We recommend

3. Be honest. If facts don't support the "official" point of view, say so. Don't cover up, or select only facts that support your argument. Admit mistakes.

4. Use facts with restraint. Make sure the information is complete, but do not belabor your point. Remove all unnecessary details.

Avoid superlatives. Never exaggerate. It is better to understate than overstate. Confronted by an obvious exaggeration, the reader is tempted to reject your entire position. Don't expect the

reader to do your toning down for you.

5. Don't state opinions as facts. You must distinguish between them so that the reader is never in doubt as to which is which.

Opinion Stated As Fact

Nonusers don't like the product.

The proposed budget level is too low to introduce the product and overcome clutter.

Opinion Not Stated As Fact

Previous research showed that nonusers don't like the product. Although we have no recent data, we doubt that nonusers have changed their minds.

The proposed budget is less than that of Product X, which had similar reach and awareness objectives. In our opinion this isn't enough money for a successful introduction.

6. Be clear. E.B. White put it best: "When you have said something, make sure you have said it. The chances of your having said it are only fair."

Cloudy

What we seek to do includes understanding the trade-offs in product attributes from both a consumer standpoint and a competitive standpoint.

It will be necessary to finish these commercials rather more quickly than we anticipated because of a change in client scheduling with regard to testing, which will now take place in early August.

Clear

We need to learn how consumers react to the products, and which products our competitors can make better than ours.

To meet new testing dates, we will need 20 prints of each commercial in three weeks—by July 22.

It is not enough to write so you can be understood. Write so you cannot be misunderstood.

7. Be concise. Letters should not be so long that they discourage the reader. Keep your letter to three or four pages at most—and use the appendix for details.

If you use tables as exhibits, refer to them in the body of the letter so the reader knows where to find them.

8. Use numbers with restraint. A few key numbers help make the point; save the tables for exhibits in the back.

Round numbers are easier to grasp than over-precise ones with decimals. But round out conservatively. Don't call 6.7 "nearly seven"—call it "over six-and-a-half."

Look at trends as well as averages; they are often more revealing.

9. Don't overuse abbreviations. They may be confusing and, to some readers, an undecipherable code. HUT could be either "homes using television" or "home-use test."

10. Don't be superficial.

Have you considered all the factors?

Is the problem a result of competition, spending, distribution, environment, copy, or the way the research was conducted?

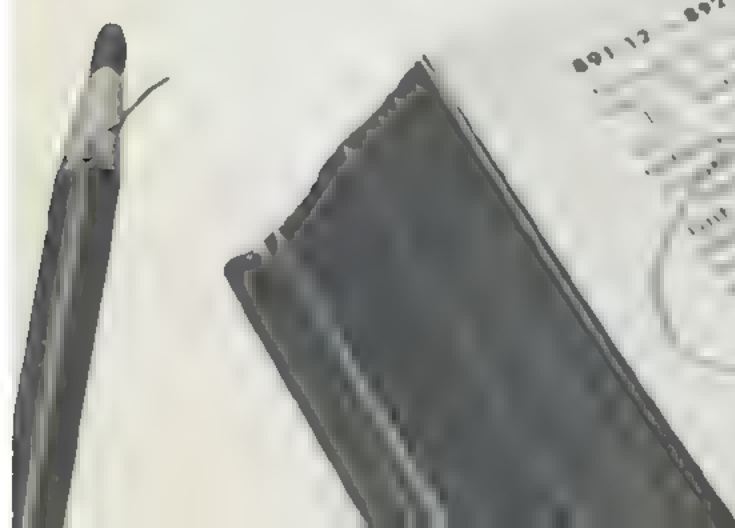
Find the correct cause for the effect.

11. Make it perfect. No typos, no misspellings, no factual errors. Unless your details are correct, the broad line of your thinking is subject to question.

12. Edit. Good writing requires rewriting. Never send your first draft. Look for holes in your argument. Check your facts—and your logic. Edit yourself ruthlessly.

David Ogilvy once saw a typed copy of a Churchill speech. Churchill had changed one adjective 11 times.

891 12 892 11



Make It Attractive To Read

A good document is easy to read and easy to refer to. It should look the part.

Pay attention to format and appearance, and remember these standard practices:

1. Give the document a title to position it for the reader. (Avoid "Re:" in your title—it is as useless as RE: GENESIS.)

2. Keep paragraphs short. Whenever you see a long paragraph try to break it up into two or more short ones.

3. Number key paragraphs. The numerals should come out from the margin against which the text is set. This looks good in typewritten matter, which can't make use of printing devices, such as boldface, to set off the numbers.

4. Use upper and lower case. Never use all capitals except for headings.

5. Crossheadings break up large masses of type. They also pull the reader into the next paragraph if written with this in mind.

Type crossheads in upper and lower case, underlined, and in line with the left-hand margin.

6. Don't indent the first line of a new paragraph. Separate para-

graphs with space, rather than indents. This looks neater.

7. Single spacing between lines. Double spacing between paragraphs.

8. When underlining phrases or whole sentences, use a single continuous underline rather than a choppy-looking underline, one word at a time, which slows reading.

9. Advertisements and memos benefit from white space. Leave adequate margins and space at the top and bottom of the page.

10. Don't make the reader turn the document on its side to read charts or advertisements. (Wide tabulated layouts, as in media plans, may be an exception. But make them horizontal foldouts if possible.)

11. Separate appendices, and clearly number them.

12. Use color copies if possible for charts or layouts. They add vitality to gray pages.

Search for ways to make your documents physically interesting. Scan them to see where you can put crossheadings, indents, underlines. Write for the eye as well as the mind.

From

To

Creative Directors
Management Supervi.

[The body of the letter contains several paragraphs of text that are extremely blurry and illegible due to the quality of the scan.]

* * *

Hard to read

...their results, repeat the
of English repeated the same
s; it continued to pull
* rotate--1st
7c sh

Easy to read

Creative strategies that lead to good advertising

Good advertising flows from a partnership between account executive and copywriter.

This does not mean that you should hang over the copywriter's shoulder day in and day out. But in the development of a sound and sensible creative strategy the creative director is as vital as the account manager.

What should go into a creative strategy? First, some definitions.

The purpose of a strategy, in brand advertising, is to position a product. Ogilvy & Mather believes that proper positioning often has more effect on sales than any other step.

Positioning is placing your product uniquely in the consumer's mind. It results from combined and consistent marketing efforts behind a brand—the product, the package, the pricing and the advertising.

Positioning is not increasing sales or distribution, changing attitudes, or introducing a product improvement.

Positioning is setting the brand apart from its competition in the mind of the consumer.

Once you have decided what position you want your brand to occupy in the consumer's mind, you need a strategy to put it there. Positioning is the result;

strategy is how you get there.

What about *brand image*? How does it differ from positioning and strategy?

The image of a brand is the product's personality beyond its physical characteristics.

Let's make these definitions clear with an example.

Mercedes-Benz is *positioned* as the best engineered automobile. This is what sets it apart from its competition.

The *strategy* is to emphasize performance, not styling.

The advertisements all reflect Mercedes' *image* of superior craftsmanship and safety, down to the smallest detail.

There are many formats for copy strategies. The differences are not important, as long as they cover these five subjects:

1. Objective. Start with a clear statement of your objective—the *position* you wish to occupy in the consumer's mind.

The essence of positioning is sacrifice; you must *give up* something so that the advertising can focus on something else.

You cannot be all things to all people.

The objective for KLM Royal Dutch Airlines advertising is to create awareness of Amsterdam as an exciting city to visit.

The remainder of the strategy is a statement of how you plan to reach that objective.

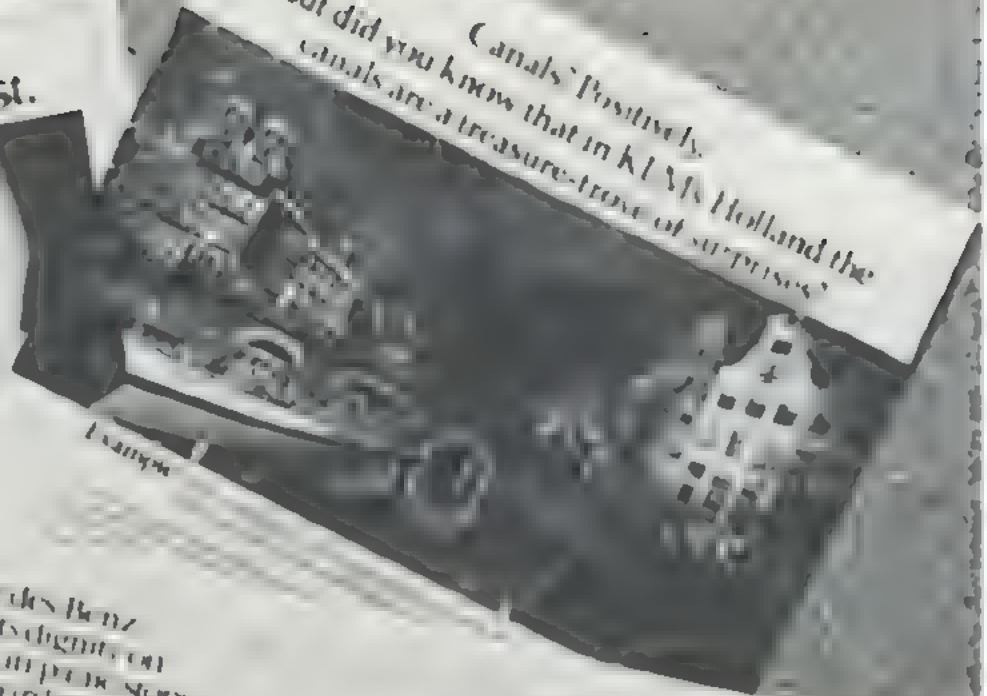
Take the Dove face test.



San
softe

Why a Mercedes Benz
doesn't lose its dignity on
sharp curves in peak stops
or on washboard roads

Canals' Positively
But did you know that in KL M's Holland the
canals are a treasure-trove of surprises?



After 2 years
of good check ups
an Wrede is glad she
checked her children
to Aim.



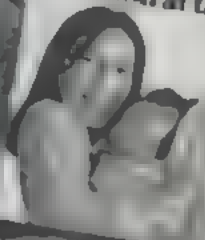
You
Wrede to 8



Take Aim against caries!



"I use only Q-tips swabs on Jane
because Q-tips have 50% more
cotton at the very tip."



2. Target Audience. Paint a three-dimensional portrait of the consumer.

Demographics are a start: age, sex, income, geography. But go further and describe the consumer's attitudes, relevant physical characteristics, personality, life-style. Include the products he or she uses now—the competitors we must replace.

Dove advertising is aimed at women with dry skin. Its moisturizing cream ingredient makes Dove better for these women than soap, which dries their faces.

The target audience is a key strategic issue; you must do your copy testing with the best prospects for your product or service.

3. Promise. The term “promise” at Ogilvy & Mather is shorthand for “promise of benefit to the consumer.”

What is the benefit of the product to the consumer? Singular. Products offer many benefits; you must select the one that is most persuasive.

The best-tasting fluoride toothpaste is Aim's benefit to mothers who want their kids to brush more often.

A good strategy always leads to a consumer *promise*—a benefit on which to build the advertising.

4. Support. Can you give a consumer a reason to *believe* the promise?

A reason-why is not always necessary, but often helps when your promise is similar to a competitor's.

Q-tips' promise of safety was made convincing by a unique reason-why: 50 percent more cotton at the very tip, so the sharp point can't come through.

Ingredients, taste tests, consumer testimonials, leadership can all help support a product benefit.

5. Tone and Manner. Search for a distinctive tone for the advertising. Tone helps build personality. Brand personalities are valuable assets for the few brands that manage to build them. They help to separate these brands from their competition.

Research showed that old-fashioned goodness was the best promise for a lemonade mix, and led to an appropriate personality for Country Time lemonade.

This is the section of the strategy where brand images are built. Make every effort to distinguish your brand from its competitor.

You won't end up with much of an image if the strategy calls only for the advertising to be straightforward and authoritative. This will distinguish you only from those competitors whose strategy is to be devious and wishy-washy.

Six Ways to Get Better Strategies

The first thing to remember about advertising is that it must be effective with the *consumer*. The first thing to remember about a copy strategy is that it must be effective with the *copywriter*.

Here are six tips on how to write a strategy:

1. Make the strategy easy to use. If you can't put what you want to say in one sentence, the chances of getting the message through to the consumer are nil.

You can back up your one-sentence statement with as much detail as necessary to explain *why* this is the best strategy. But that is for comprehension, not communication.

2. Decide what is important. Not everything in a strategy can be communicated, nor is everything equally important.

What is the *net impression* you wish to leave with the consumer? Make it an explicit part of the strategy.

3. Write the strategy for the copywriter. Not just for your client.

Don't use technical jargon. Translate technical terms.

4. Be single-minded. Great ideas are simple, not complicated.

5. Deal with the long-term selling objectives. A strategy must never be limited to a single campaign.

Make sure that you separate strategy from execution. Guidelines should never limit the writer to the current campaign.

6. Make the creative team part of the process. Strategies are best developed as a team, in an atmosphere of mutual understanding. They are not handed down from the mountaintop as commandments.



Creative Briefings

Put down your pencil for a minute.

With an approved strategy in hand, and never before, you are now ready to launch the creative assignment—but *don't do it in writing.*

Always give creative briefings in person. It will save time and avoid misunderstandings.

After the briefing, *confirm* the assignment in a memo. Then, there can be no confusion over the amount of work called for, timing, or any specific requirements.

Good advertising flows from a partnership. Your responsibility is to provide facts and sound thinking.



Some notes on usage and style

For the sake of consistency, follow these conventions of usage:

1. Write the word "percent" instead of %, except in tables. It looks better.
2. Write "Ogilvy & Mather," not "O&M," in anything headed out of the agency. O&M is OK for purely internal communications.
3. Refer to Ogilvy & Mather offices by city rather than by country. Frankfurt, not Germany. Toronto, not Canada. (This eliminates ambiguity—in ten countries we have offices in two or more cities.)

This manual tells you *how* to say things in writing, not what to say. Style does not substitute for substance. Writing must reflect both to be effective.

First you must know your business. Then you must think clearly.

The many principles here may seem overwhelming at first. But there is no easy road. Even professional writers sweat over their work. With practice these principles will become second nature before long.

You'll also find that as your writing improves, you'll speak better too. Confident writing begets effective communications in all forms.

The benefits of being a better writer are clear—more successful advertising for your clients, more personal success for you.

A reading list on writing

Here is suggested reading to help you improve your writing:

The Elements of Style (71 pages)—William Strunk, Jr., revised by E.B. White

The Golden Book on Writing (81 pages)—David Lambuth

Strictly Speaking (192 pages)—Edwin Newman

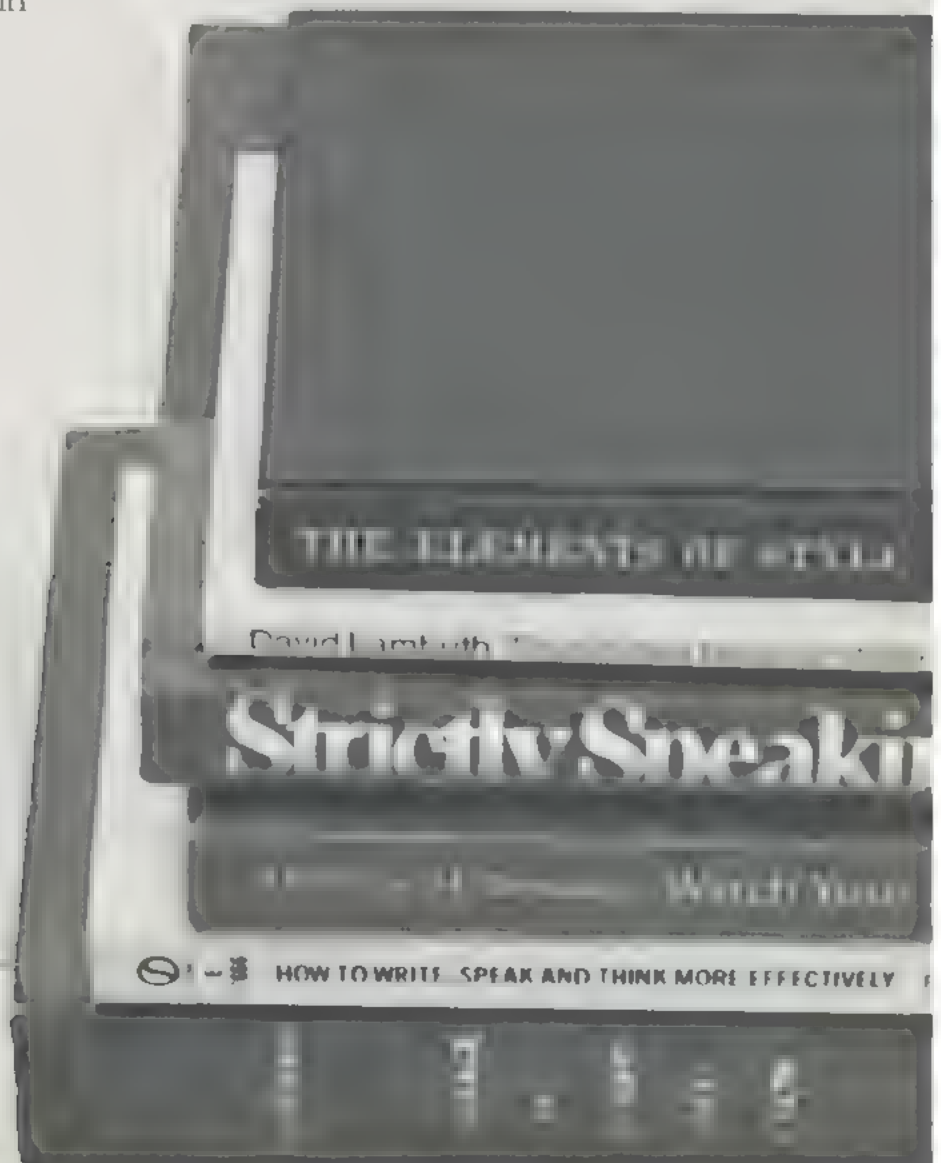
Watch Your Language (276 pages)—Theodore Bernstein

How to Write, Speak and Think More Effectively (362 pages)—Rudolph Flesch

Language in Thought and Action (307 pages)—S.I. Hayakawa

On Writing Well: An Informal Guide to Writing Non-Fiction (151 pages)—William Zinsser

The Bible



On Writing Well

Examples of good business writing

OGILVY & MATHER INC.

2 East 48 Street New York 10017

Telephone (212) Murray Hill 8-6100 Telex: 620554 and 12279 • Cable: Flagbearer New York

October 6, 1978

Mr. Charles Jones
Continental Products
Weight Losers Division
Elmsford, Iowa 32155

Dear Charlie:

Slim Copy -- Topeka Test Market

This recommends that we air only the "Raquel" campaign in Topeka, and that we don't use "Surprise" to introduce the product sample or for any other purpose.

Background

Persuasion test -- "Raquel" and "Surprise" received similar Definitely Will Buy scores (14 and 13 percent, respectively). However, the diagnostics showed that the commercials communicated benefits differently. "Raquel" communicated convenience, health and low calorie better, while "Surprise" did a better job in communicating good taste.

Recall test -- "Raquel" received a significantly higher score:

	<u>Proven and Related</u>	<u>Proven</u>
"Raquel"	28	20
"Surprise"	21	14

The verbatims showed that "Raquel" was equal to or better than "Surprise" in communicating all benefits except good taste, where "Surprise" was much higher.

Issues -- You suggested that since the two commercials were equally persuasive, and together communicate all benefits, they might be aired simultaneously in mini-market.

Mr. Charles Jones
October 6, 1978
Page 2

Another possibility is to use "Surprise" to introduce the product sample instead of as part of the regular pool.

Recommendation

The agency recommends exclusive use of the "Raquel" campaign in Topeka.

Rationale

1. Persuasion was roughly equal among different groups of people, with minor exceptions:
 - "Surprise" scored marginally higher among upper-income women (11 percent of total acceptors vs. 8 percent for "Raquel").
 - "Raquel" scored marginally higher among working women (48 percent of total acceptors vs. 41 percent for "Surprise").

We don't give much weight to differences as small as these.

- Although communication of good taste was higher for "Surprise," belief that the product offers good taste was nearly equal for both commercials (as it was on other benefits).

	Communication		Believability Ratio	
Taste	1	1	1	1
Low Calorie	1	1	1	1
Health	1	1	1	1
Convenience	1	1	1	1
Uses	1	1	1	1
Texture	1	1	1	1

Source: Slim Persuasion Test, Aug., 1978, Tables 10 & 16.

1. Conclusion: Since both commercials are equally effective, we would air the commercial which proved more effective in the long term. "Raquel" stands the greater chance of having more impact over the long term.

Mr. Charles Jones
October 6, 1978
Page 3

4. "Raquel" and "Surprise" are distinctively different commercials in look, tone and method of presentation. Airing both simultaneously risks confusing the viewer and weakening the message and brand image.
 - Raquel is a credible presenter for the product, with authoritative delivery.
 - "Surprise" presents two testimonials in a warmer, less straightforward manner. There may be less "authority" since the testifiers do not speak from prior experience with the product, as Raquel does.
5. It is not appropriate to announce the sample on television -- with "Surprise" or any other commercial -- because only 23 percent of total households will receive samples. Any broadscale announcement of the sample drop might irritate those who didn't receive it.

Summary

The agency believes Slim should be introduced with a campaign as single-minded, persuasive, and memorable as possible. We have a campaign which we believe will accomplish this objective, and see no advantage in diluting it with another commercial which has proved less effective.

* * *

We need your approval by October 20, to order prints in time for shipping.

Cordially,



Joyce Durrell

JD/jas

cc: C. Black
D. Elliott
K. Phillips

OGILVY & MATHER INC.

2 East 48 Street - New York 10017

Telephone: (212) Murray Hill 8-6100 - Telex: 620354 and 12279 - Cable: Flagbearer New York

October 25, 1978

Mr. Charles Jones
Continental Products
Weight Losers Division
Elmsford, Iowa 32155

Dear Charlie:

New Diet-Sweet Television Copy

This letter reports on a new TV commercial now being aired for Diet-Sweet, and evaluates its potential.

Background

Diet-Sweet has been running "Do it for you" musical advertising for three years. Their strategy has apparently been:

- . Use Diet-Sweet instead of sugar, to lose weight -- so that you'll like the way you look.

All their advertising has had a cosmetic feel and an implied promise of an improved social life.

New Health Strategy

The new advertising is part of the same campaign, continuing with the same jingle and theme ("Do it for you"). But the strategy has been changed to a health strategy:

- . Use Diet-Sweet instead of sugar, to lose weight -- so that you'll feel better (and, implicitly, live longer).

Any hint that being slender will help attract men has been removed from the advertising.

Assessment

Diet-Sweet has probably switched to this new strategy in response to young women's growing interest in health and physical fitness. We do not believe that this is good advertising for a diet product, and we expect Diet-Sweet to be hurt by this change.

Mr. Charles Jones
October 25, 1978
Page 2

Rationale

1. The 1975 Promise Test showed health to be the weakest of the three major strategic directions for a liquid diet product:

	<u>Percent Rating "Important"</u>
Appearance	83
Taste	54
Health	42

2. According to the Attitude Tracking Study fielded in July, interest in health and physical fitness has grown in the last year, but is still limited to a small minority of women.

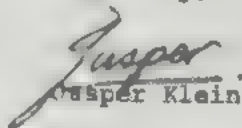
	<u>Percent "Very Concerned"</u>	
<u>Interest Area</u>	<u>July, 1977</u>	<u>July, 1978</u>
Health	5	12
Physical Fitness	3	9

3. Whenever we have persuasion-tested Slim commercials, we have always found male approval to be an essential ingredient.

Indicated Action

Despite our confidence that the new diet-sweet copy will fail, we recommend persuasion testing of this advertising. We will order a quality kinescope as soon as you approve, and get this test going as soon as possible.

Cordially,


Jasper Klein

JK/jas

OGILVY & MATHER INC. *Advertising*

2 EAST 48 STREET, NEW YORK 10017 - (212) MU 5-1141, 5-6106

Conference Report

Date September 6, 1978

Number 33

From Joyce Durrell

Client: Continental Products

To Charles Jones

Subject: Spotlight

C.C. J. Klein
K. Phillips
J. Johnson

Place: Elmsford

Date September 5, 1978

<u>Present:</u>	<u>Client</u>	<u>Agency</u>
	J. Jones	J. Durrell
	J. Johnson	K. Phillips
		J. Klein

1. Radio Pool-Outs

The client approved the agency's recommendation to produce 60-second radio versions of "Announcement" and "Presenter."

Next Steps

Agency to submit radio scripts once the "Presenter" television commercial is approved.

2. Trade Advertisement

It was agreed that the second trade advertisement should express Spotlight's growth and size without sales specifics, and should emphasize the contribution Spotlight has made toward Continental's becoming an important factor in diet products.

It was decided to substitute the word "unique" for "simple" in the headline. The agency will also explore including a graph in the layout.

Next Steps

Agency to present revisions week of September 11.

3. "Presenter" Pool-Outs

The agency presented two 30 versions of "Presenter." Version B included the line "dissolves faster than sugar." This line will be added to Version A, which client approved.

September 6, 1978
Page 2

Agency will rework Version B to build in more conviction.

Next Steps

Agency to present revised Version B storyboards the week of September 11.

4. December Print Advertisement

It was agreed that the headline will emphasize the taste of Spotlite.

Copy points one and two were revised to end with a more competitive line.

Next Steps

Agency to present revised copy for client approval by September 13.

5. Western Campaign

The agency presented final storyboards for review.

Next Steps

Agency to record and mix sound track the week of September 11. Meet with client and shoot animatics the week of September 18.

J.D.

OGILVY & MATHER INC.

2 East 48 Street New York 10017

Telephone: (212) Murray Hill 8-6100 - Telex: 620554 and 12179 - Cable: Flagbeam New York

October 20, 1978

Mr. J. Johnson
Continental Products
Weight Loss Division
Elmsford, Iowa 32155

Dear Jeff:

Spotlite Liquid Store Checks

Let me welcome you to the business by reporting on store checks I conducted in Cleveland and Rochester -- the two lead markets for Spotlite Liquid -- on October 16 and 17. I visited a total of 38 grocery stores, 19 in each market.

Purpose

The purpose of the trip was to check Spotlite Liquid's in-store position (shelving, distribution, pricing, displays) as we head into the peak season.

Conclusion

Spotlite Liquid is in a better position than it was a year ago (i.e., better distribution). But we still have much to do to achieve our objectives.

Overall Findings

1. Product Availability was 80 percent in Cleveland, 60 percent in Rochester.

Depth of distribution was a problem. The 6-ounce bottle was the only bottle size in all stores. The 4-ounce bottle and the 8-ounce squeeze bottle I found only in one store -- Fazio's in Cleveland.

2. Product Movement was very poor -- two stores out of a total of 25 checked. But in these two there was evidence of good movement.

Mr. J. Johnson
October 20, 1978
Page 2

3. The best evidence of good product movement was in the one store where Spotlite had multiple package types and its fair share of display space (Bell's in Rochester).
4. Pricing on the 6-ounce size was a problem. In most cases, Spotlite was at a disadvantage versus both Diet-Sweet and Allure. However, pricing on the new sizes and forms was at parity with competition.
- Shelf facings were a problem, but not an unexpected one since only one size was in most stores.
- Diet-Sweet and Allure have displays in most stores, with all sizes and forms represented. Sugar Near is being introduced, and has good distribution and display activity.
- The store managers I spoke with regard Spotlite Liquid the same way they regard Sugar Near -- as an unimportant line extension. It will take work by the sales force to change this perception.
- Consumers were not in a "dieting" frame of mind since the holidays are still too far away. Those I talked with were largely unaware of Spotlite.

Indicated Action

- Ensure that 6-ounce bottle pricing is fixed, to gain parity with Diet-Sweet and Allure.
- Get all authorized packaged sizes into stores and onto shelves.
- Concentrate on displays to build in-store awareness.

Next Steps

We should plan to check these markets every two weeks from mid-November till Christmas.

Sincerely,


Joyce Durrell

From Jasper Klein

Date October 30, 1978

Memorandum

To: ACCOUNT AND CREATIVE GROUPS -- SPOTLITE

Sugar Substitutes -- July-August Nielsen

1. Spotlite is strong, and growing with the market.

Spotlite is holding a 15 share of dollar sales for the second consecutive period. This is an increase of 2.0 points versus year ago.

In terms of ounces, Spotlite is showing the strongest growth of any brand. Consumption is up 20 percent versus strong levels of a year ago. This can be traced to the continuing trade-up to larger sizes.

2. Super-Sweet and Swizzlers continue to turn around.

They are the only two brands to increase share significantly versus May-June and year ago. Their gains coincide with increased advertising and promotion spending, plus new copy behind product improvements.

Spotlite is the only brand holding its own against them; Allure and Diet-Sweet are declining.

TOTAL SWEETENER SHARE TRENDS -- 3 OUTLETS
STANDARD DOLLAR BASIS

	1977 M-J	1978	
		M-J	J-A
<u>Continental Products</u>			
Spotlite	13.0	15.0	15.0
Flatter	9.5	9.6	9.4
<u>American Products</u>			
Swizzlers	4.9	5.1	5.9
Allure	37.8	37.2	37.1
Sugar Near	--	1.0	1.0
<u>National Products</u>			
Weightless	2.1	1.1	1.1
Super-Sweet	5.0	5.5	6.0
Diet-Sweet	20.2	20.0	18.9
<u>Other</u>			
Private Label	2.0	1.1	1.0
Reward	4.5	4.4	4.6

The market continues to grow.

It has reached new heights in dollars and ounces for five periods in a row.

The entire sugar substitutes category is healthy. Strength is attributed to:

Increased advertising expenditures.

\$7 million was spent in the last eight months -- \$1 million more than year ago. Three brands in particular Sweet and Swizzlers. Swizzlers' dollars may be coming from Allure, since Allure seems to be pulling back. Diet-Sweet spending was flat this period.

Increased sales volume.

Food sales are up 10 percent while food and drug sales are flat. Last year's levels, mass merchandisers gained 50 percent. Food store sales are up 10 percent, and drug sales are up 5 percent.

Increased sales volume.

September store displays for all brands were up 10 percent. All-time high, they usually indicate a strong market.

Spotlight sales are already 30 percent up over the same period last year. At this rate, total 1978 sales could reach \$2 billion, a 20 percent increase over 1977.

Spotlight advertising campaign. New print and radio copy first appeared in October.

The brand had a premium offer in September and a national newspaper coupon campaign in October. A 10 percent off any size in November.

OGILVY & MATHER INC.

2 East 48 Street - New York 10017

Telephone: (212) Murray Hill 8-6100 - Telex: 630554 and 12279 - Cable: Flanagan New York

September 8, 1978

Mr. Charles Johnson
Continental Products
Weight Losers Division
Elmsford, Iowa 32155

Dear Charlie:

Sugar Substitutes -- 1977 Competition

This letter summarizes media spending in the sugar substitutes category for 1977. It also includes a comparison of 1977 spending with 1976 spending.

National Spending -- Major Brands

- Total spending in the category was the same as the previous year. However, Spotlight, Super and Swizzlers increased spending, while Allure dropped by half.

Spotlight
Allure
Diet-Sweet
Flatter
Super-Sweet
Swizzlers

TOTAL

1976	1977	% Change
Spotlight	1.2	100%
Allure	0.6	-50%
Diet-Sweet	1.2	100%
Flatter	1.2	100%
Super-Sweet	1.2	100%
Swizzlers	1.2	100%
TOTAL	6.0	0%

Source: LNA, 1977-1978

1. Allure's media buying strategy, which is based on differences in advertising and in target audience:

- Allure bought only day spot and early morning spot television, probably because of their older franchise. Their strategy appears to be to spend only in key markets on the East and West Coasts, thereby getting more impact from a small budget.

Mr. Charles Johnson
September 8, 1978
Page 2

- Diet-Sweet, as usual, used prime network only (despite their small budget).
- Spotlight has a young, upscale target audience, and used a lot of prime network and magazines to reach them.
- Three small brands, Flatter, Super-Sweet and Swizzlers spent only in magazines.

(\$ millions)

	<u>Network TV</u>		<u>Spot TV</u>	<u>Magazines</u>
	<u>Day</u>	<u>Prime</u>		
Spotlite	.7	2.0	.3	1.0
Allure	-	-	1.5	-
Diet-Sweet	-	1.5	-	-
Flatter	-	-	-	.3
Super-Sweet	-	-	-	.7
Swizzlers	-	-	-	1.0
TOTAL	.7	3.5	1.8	3.0

Source: LNA, 1977.

3. Spending by quarter also reflects apparent differences among the marketing strategies of the brands:

- Allure spent continuously, at low levels -- similar to proprietary drug patterns. Their strategy appears to be continuity at adequate frequency levels rather than broad reach.
- Spotlight, on the other hand, spent only during the peak pre-summer and pre-holiday dieting seasons.
- Diet-Sweet spent only during the first two quarters, possibly because of budget pressure.

(\$ millions)

	<u>1st Qtr.</u>	<u>2nd Qtr.</u>	<u>3rd Qtr.</u>	<u>4th Qtr.</u>	<u>Total</u>
Spotlite	-	2.5	-	1.5	4.0
Allure	.4	.4	.3	.4	1.5
Diet-Sweet	.8	.7	-	-	1.5
Flatter	-	.2	.1	-	.3
Super-Sweet	-	.2	.1	.4	.7
Swizzlers	.3	.3	.3	.1	1.0
TOTAL	1.5	3.3	.8	2.4	9.0

Source: LNA, 1977.

Mr. Charles Johnson
September 8, 1978
Page 3

4. A share of voice analysis shows that Spotlite, Super-Sweet and Swizzlers outspent their share of market significantly, while the other brands were badly under-supported. This has resulted in rapid growth for the supported brands -- and in sales declines for the others.

	1977 Share of Advertising	1977 Market Share	Index
Spotlite	44.4	13.8	321
Allure	16.7	37.7	44
Diet-Sweet	16.7	20.0	84
Flatter	3.3	9.5	35
Super-Sweet	7.8	5.2	150
Swizzlers	11.1	5.0	222

Sources: LNA, 1977; Nielsen, 1977.

Implications for Slim Test Planning

The agency recommends:

1. The \$8 million rate now being tested in Topeka still seems an appropriate introductory level for Slim. It will give Slim a 47 percent share of national advertising, nearly twice the target share of market (25 percent). This should be sufficient to support the introduction.
2. Slim should enter an East or West Coast test market in addition to Topeka, so that the test experience includes a market where Allure is supported. Despite Allure's declining share, it is the leading brand. It must be a factor in Slim's test experience.

We will update this analysis in six months.

Cordially,

Jasper
Jasper Klein

JK/jas



The reader doesn't have much time.



Find the right word.



Edit yourself ruthlessly.



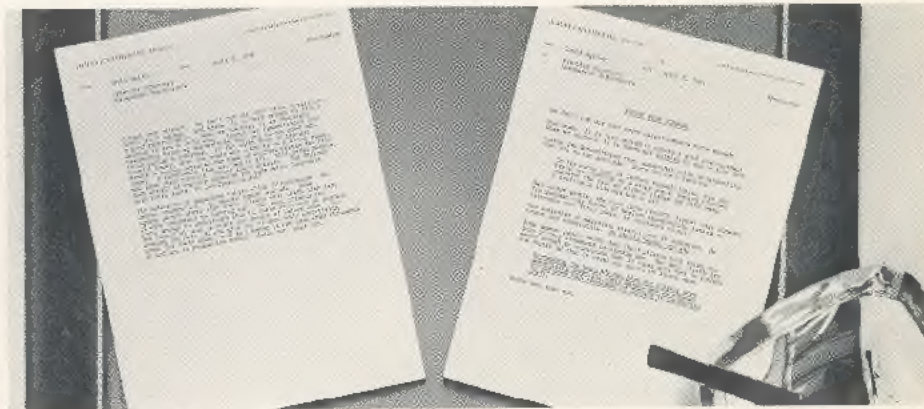
A good letter is personal.



Make your reports clear.



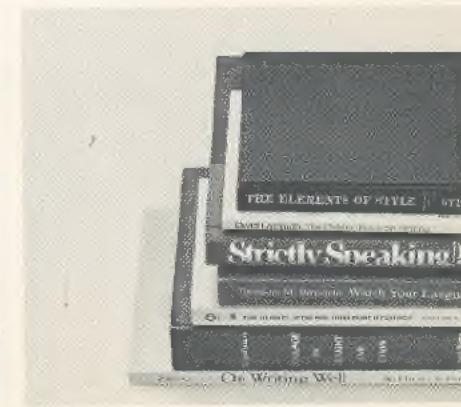
Take notes at meetings.



Make it attractive to read.



Always give creative briefings in person.



Read to improve your writing.

Ogilvy & Mather